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Message Text

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PAGE 01 PONTA 00255 140302Z
ACTION EB-07

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, PO
SUBJECT: CIVAIR - FUEL FOR MOBIL AT LAJES

REF: STATE 154905

THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORTATION AND TOURISM, PACHECO DE ALMEIDA, SAID THE PRIMARY REASON WHY THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WANTS MOBIL PROVIDE FUEL FOR CIVIL AVIATION IS TO ELIMINATE THE DELAYS IN SCHEDULED FLIGHTS CAUSED BY THE US AIR FORCE REFUELING SYSTEM. THE DELAYS OCCUR BECAUSE REFUELING CIVIL AVIATION IS SEVENTH PRIORITY AND BECAUSE USAF REGULATIONS PROHIBIT REFUELING WHILE CARGO OR BAGGAGE ARE BEING HANDLED. AT SANTA MARIA AND PONTA DELGADA AIRPORTS BAGGAGE AND CARGO CAN BE MOVED DURING REFUELING. ALMEIDA EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT GEN. WIGLEY AND HIS STAFF GIVE CIVIL AVIATION THE BEST POSSIBLE SERVICE WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS OF USAF REGULATIONS. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS PRODUCED A STUDY OF THE SITUATION AT LAJES IN THE LAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS SHOWING THE NUMBER OF FLIGHTS AND THE LENGTH OF DELAYS CAUSED BY THE REFUELING PROBLEM. IN ONE OF THE WORST MONTHS, DECEMBER 1976, 7 TAP FLIGHTS (OUT OF 20) WERE DELAYED AT TOTAL 12 HOURS 10 MINUTES OR AN AVERAGE OF 1 HOUR 44 MINUTES EACH FLIGHT DELAYED. IN MARCH
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PAGE 02 PONTA 00255 140302Z

1976 11 TAP FLIGHTS WERE DELAYED AN AVERAGE OF 52 MINUTES EACH. IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THE YEAR 47 TAP FLIGHTS WERE DELAYED A TOTAL OF 34 HOURS, AND 55 SATA FLIGHTS LOST A TOTAL 23 HOURS AND 55 MINUTES. ALMEIDA EXPLAINED THAT IN ADDITION TO PASSENGER INCONVENIENCE, THE DELAYS COST THE AIRLINES MONEY; TWA, WHEN IT FLIES INTO LAJES WOULD ALSO EXPERIENCE THESE DELAYS AND THE RESULTANT EXTRA COST.

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Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

2. ANOTHER FACTOR ALMEIDA MENTIONED WAS PRICE. ACCORDING TO HIS FIGURES, TODAY THE AIRLINES PAY 55 CENTS A GALLON FOR JP-4 SUPPLIED BY MOBIL, SHELL AND OTHERS AT SANTA MARIA AND 67.9 CENTS A GALLON FOR JP-4 PURCHASED FROM THE USAF AT LAJES. MOST TAP AND SATA PLANES USE JP-4. HOWEVER, 115/145 GASOLINE, USED BY ONE PLANE SATA FLIES DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, COSTS ONE DOLLAR AT SANTA MARIA AND 92.4 CENTS AT LAJES.

3. ALMEIDA SAID MOBIL IS READY TO PROVIDE TRUCKS AND PERSONNEL TO HANDLE THE REFUELING THUS FREEING THE AIRLINES FROM USAF PRIORITIES AND REGULATIONS WHICH CAUSE DELAYS. MOBIL DOES NOT WANT TO IMPORT THE FUEL DIRECTLY BECAUSE OF THE VAST INVESTMENT WHICH WOULD BE NEEDED TO BUILD ITS OWN PIPELINES AND STORAGE TANKS. THE PROBLEM IS NOT THE LACK OF FUEL STORED AT LAJES BUT THE DELAYS IN DELIVERY TO CIVIL AVIATION.

4. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO RAISE THE MOBIL QUESTION DURING THE LAJES BASE NEGOTIATIONS. THE STUDY, FROM WHICH THE FIGURES MENTIONED ABOVE WERE CULLED, IS IN THE HANDS OF THE AZOREAN COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH PREPARATIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS.

COMMENT: THE AZOREANS ARE UNLIKELY TO DROP THE MOBIL ISSUE, SO UNLESS THE GOP WANTS TO AND IS ABLE TO SQUASH IT,THE USG WILL BE CONFRONTED WITH THE QUESTION OF FUEL FOR MOBIL DURING THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS. IN ADDITION, THE AID FINANCED STUDY OF THE AIR
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PAGE 03 PONTA 00255 140302Z

TRANSPORTATION SECTOR WILL ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF CIVIL USE OF LAJES AND NO DOUBT THE MOBIL QUESTION WILL APPEAR THERE ALSO.
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